

£10.3 million EU funding boost for Welsh Marine technology sector

The EU funding will support the design and testing of a fully-submerged membrane-style wave energy convertor capable of generating large amounts of electricity – paving the way for the developers, Bombora Wave Power Europe, to construct and commercialise the technology from its Pembrokeshire base.

The £15 million project is expected to create up to 20 skilled jobs in South West Wales, supporting the local economy and creating opportunities for communities in Pembrokeshire.

This latest EU funding allocation follows substantial EU and Welsh Government investment in Wales' marine energy industry, including demonstration zones in Pembrokeshire and Anglesey and support for technology developers based in Wales.

Professor Drakeford said:

“We want Wales to be at the forefront of research and innovation in the marine energy field and I am delighted to announce more than £10m of EU funding to help develop technology that creates large amounts of renewable electricity.

“Developers from across the globe are showing an active interest in developing projects in Welsh waters, recognising Wales has one of the best marine energy resources and support structures to be found anywhere.

“It's a very exciting time for marine energy in Wales and this initiative is another major step in building a thriving industry in Pembrokeshire and Wales.”

Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths, said:

“This investment is excellent news for the local economy and the wider marine technology industry. Clean energy will play an important role in the development of our prosperous, low carbon economy and help us deliver our aim of reducing emissions by at least 80% by 2050.”

Bombora Wave Power Europe's Managing Director, Sam Leighton said:

“Bombora is very grateful to secure the £10.3m EU support package

for our exciting 1.5MW trial project. Since setting up our European headquarters in Pembrokeshire last year we have been working with local suppliers and have quickly grown our talented team to work on this exciting new project.”

‘No deal’ Brexit worst possible scenario for Welsh patients – Welsh Health Secretary warns UK Government

The Health Secretary warned a ‘no deal’ Brexit would be the worst possible scenario for Welsh patients as he and the Minister for Children, Older People and Social Care, Huw Irranca-Davies, joined leaders from across health and social care in Wales to discuss the implications of Brexit on the sector.

Central to the talks was contingency planning for a ‘no deal’ Brexit, including ensuring an uninterrupted supply of medication and securing the rights and status of EU nationals working within the health and social care sector.

Vaughan Gething said:

“I’m encouraged by today’s talks, which have demonstrated a will from all within the sector to work together to protect the best interests of Welsh patients and social care clients.

“The UK Government must do more to avoid the worst possible scenario of a ‘no deal’ Brexit, which could have real and lasting consequences for our services, for individuals, families and communities across Wales.

“But, because of the continued uncertain situation we find ourselves in, we must act responsibly and prepare for this scenario. Our organisations are well-rehearsed in the long list of risks and challenges; today was an opportunity to come together and constructively discuss our readiness and make sure that whether the UK Government secures a deal or not, we continue to deliver quality care and support to those who need it.”

Huw Irranca-Davies said:

“We can only overcome the challenges Brexit poses for health and social care by working together. Today’s meeting showed a

commitment to doing this, with representation from across the sector.

“We’ve already allocated some of our EU Transition Fund towards research into how the Brexit process could impact on social care and childcare workforces in Wales, and help the sectors plan for any eventuality. Today was an opportunity to hear directly from those within the sector about their concerns and reassure them we are working to support them to plan for their workforce requirements post-Brexit.”

The round table event was organised by the Welsh NHS Confederation, with their members and other representatives from across the sector.

Vanessa Young, Director of the Welsh NHS Confederation said:

“Today has been an important step in our planning for Brexit. Our preparations need to be coordinated and comprehensive, starting with understanding what action is being taken nationally by the UK and Welsh Governments.

We have therefore urged Ministers to work with us through a Ministerial Stakeholder Reference Group so that together we can ensure patients and social care clients will continue to receive the treatment they need whatever the outcome of the negotiations.”

St Athan to be “Home of Electrification for Aston Martin”

The luxury car brand has announced today that its new UK manufacturing facility at St Athan will become the brand’s centre for electrification and the home of the Lagonda brand, the world’s first zero-emission luxury marque.

The Rapide E will be the first Aston Martin to be built in Wales when production commences in 2019.

It will be Aston Martin’s first all-electric production model and is set to be a highly-desirable electric vehicle with the levels of performance expected of an Aston Martin.

First Minister, Carwyn Jones said

“I am very proud of Aston Martin’s decision to locate its new

manufacturing facility in St Athan. It showed a huge vote of confidence in the Welsh Government's can do attitude and in the support that we can offer to businesses that want to work with us.

"Today's announcement that St Athan will also be the "Home of Electrification" for both Aston Martin and Lagonda is another huge win for Wales. It is a genuine testament to the reputation, dedication and skills of our work force. It also further cements Wales' relationship with Aston Martin and is an excellent and very tangible example of how Welsh Government support can act as the catalyst for further economic growth and job creation."

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

"Our Economic Action Plan is clear about the importance of decarbonisation to the future of our economy so I am absolutely delighted that Aston Martin has taken the decision to make St Athan its centre for electric vehicle production.

"I am confident that this decision, both directly and via the supply chain will help to drive genuine economic growth and result in the creation of more highly skilled Welsh jobs."

Dr Andy Palmer, Aston Martin President and Chief Executive Officer, said:

"Aston Martin sees itself as a future leader in the development of zero emission technologies, and I am delighted that St Athan will be our 'Home of Electrification' for both the Aston Martin and Lagonda brands.

"The Rapide E will spearhead development of Aston Martin's low- and zero-emission vehicle strategy. With the reintroduction of the Lagonda brand, this is a demonstration of how electrification features prominently in our business plan moving forward."

[Views sought on A458 improvements in Welshpool town centre](#)

The Welsh Government has today (Monday, 10 September) launched a consultation on proposals following a review last year based on concerns raised by traders and residents.

Revisions to the existing network being consulted on are:

- The possibility of reducing Broad Street to single lane from The Cross to the 'High Street' outside the town hall.
- The installation of a 'Zebra' controlled crossing on Broad Street near the town hall
- Improvements to make Brook Street two-way between Church Street and Jehu Road which would require alterations to A458 signage at Sarn-y-Bryn Caled roundabout and Flash junction.

The consultation begins today and lasts until Monday, 3 December.

Transport Secretary Ken Skates said:

"Businesses and residents have previously expressed their concerns over pedestrian safety, driver behaviour and parking issues in Welshpool town centre.

"This consultation provides an excellent opportunity for people to share their opinion on the proposed options aimed at improving traffic flow and safety.

"These views will form an important part of the decision process and I would encourage everyone with an interest to contribute to this consultation."

A one day drop-in session will be held on 14 September and 30 October at Welshpool Town Hall between 10am and 7pm.

The consultation documents and plans will also be available for viewing during opening hours at Welshpool Town Council offices and the Tourist Information Centre for the full 12 weeks.

Further details of the proposals and how to share your views can be found on the [A458 Welshpool town centre one way system consultation](#) webpage.

Work begins on step change in emotional and mental health support in schools

As part of a multi-agency approach, schools have an important role to help deliver the ambitious goal of building a population of emotionally-resilient and mentally healthy children and young people in Wales.

A 'whole school' approach would ensure that mental health and wellbeing becomes central to the way schools work and will touch on many different aspects of school life. This means that the school ethos will support the broader mental health and wellbeing of learners, which in turn will help to prevent other issues from developing or escalating, including mental health issues.

Education Secretary, Kirsty Williams and Health and Social Services Secretary, Vaughan Gething today announced a Joint Ministerial Task and Finish Group is being set up to accelerate work on this approach.

Schools have a clear role in supporting prevention and helping with early intervention. It will look at the new curriculum being developed and consider issues such as staff training.

The new group will see how different activities already taking place can be brought together; highlight any gaps in provision; and ensure energy and resources are targeted so they can have maximum benefit.

The work of the group is in response to and, will be informed by, the report by the National Assembly's Children, Young People and Education Committee, Mind over Matter, which called for emotional and mental wellbeing and resilience to be a stated national priority and contained recommendations for how this could be taken forward.

The group will be jointly chaired by the two Cabinet Secretaries and will bring together those working in education and health and the wider public and third sectors. Lynne Neagle AM, chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee, has agreed to act as an observer to the group and will participate in its work.

A multi-agency and multi-profession workshop will take place today (Friday September 7) to explore what a 'whole school approach' could involve and where gaps in current support exist. Findings from the workshop will further inform the work of the task and finish group.

Education Secretary, Kirsty Williams said:

"The emotional and mental health of our young people is paramount and that's why we want to make sure they are fully supported – through each stage of their education – to be emotionally and mentally resilient, confident and, above all, happy.

"Work is already underway to provide dedicated professional support to schools, including our Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) pilot, but what we're talking about here is an approach that goes right across the school, connects activities already taking place and identifies where we can go further and faster.

“We want to schools to become exemplary in the way they promote mental health and wellbeing and this group is just the beginning of a process that will take us to that point.”

Health and Social Services Secretary, Vaughan Gething added:

“In 2016, the Welsh Government made mental health one of its five national priorities, because we recognise good mental health is absolutely vital.

“We fully recognise the importance of supporting the emotional well-being of our children and young people. Schools have a crucial role in identifying problems early, and helping to provide children and young people with the tools to cope with the stresses of growing up.

“And that’s what today’s announcement is all about. Taken together – the work we are announcing today, and that of our partners across statutory and third sectors, has the potential to deliver the step-change we all seek. It will help ensure our children and young people have the right support, in the right place, at the right time, which will enable them to grow up in healthy and nurturing environments, giving them the best possible opportunity to fulfil their true potential.”

Lynne Neagle, Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee, said:

“I welcome the establishment of this important group, as a direct response to the work of the Children, Young People and Education Committee and our recent report on the emotional and mental health of children in Wales. As a committee, we are keen to maintain the pace of work necessary in this area and look forward to being involved in shaping the final terms of reference by the end of this month.

“Cross-sector and cross-professional cooperation is key to this, and as an independent participant in the group’s work, I will do all I can to ensure that a whole-school approach is part of a wider whole-system approach to emotional and mental health for Wales’ children and young people.”